

Communication Handout 1

# Phone Talk

**1. The following are possible responses to a telephone call. Which ones are acceptable when you're at work?**

*(more than one answer may be correct)*

- a) \_\_\_\_ Hi.
- b) \_\_\_\_ Hello. This is Jane Marshall.  
Who's calling?
- c) \_\_\_\_ Tredwell Chemicals. How may I direct your call?
- d) \_\_\_\_ Hello. Who do you want to talk to?
- e) \_\_\_\_ Tredwell Chemicals. Jane Marshall speaking.
- f) \_\_\_\_ Mailroom. Jane speaking.
- g) \_\_\_\_ Mailroom. Jane Marshall speaking.
- h) \_\_\_\_ Hi. What can I do for you?
- i) \_\_\_\_ Hi. If you've got a problem, you've come to the right place.

**2. A caller asks for someone you don't know. How do you respond?**

*(more than one answer may be correct)*

- a) \_\_\_\_ I never heard of Joe Sargeant.
- b) \_\_\_\_ Mr. Sargeant may work in another department. I'll transfer you to our operator.
- c) \_\_\_\_ Nobody's here to ask. You'd better call back tomorrow.
- d) \_\_\_\_ Are you sure you want the mailroom?
- e) \_\_\_\_ You probably dialed the wrong number.
- f) \_\_\_\_ S-a-r-g-e-a-n-t? Let me check our company directory for you.

**3. A caller asks for your boss who is out sick. What do you say?**

*(more than one answer may be correct)*

- a) \_\_\_\_ Tell him/her to call your boss at home.
- b) \_\_\_\_ Offer to take a message.
- c) \_\_\_\_ Get the name of the caller and number where your boss can call him/her back. Write it down.
- d) \_\_\_\_ Suggest that the caller call back at another time.
- e) \_\_\_\_ Tell the caller what's wrong—or what you think is wrong—with your boss' health.

- f) \_\_\_\_ Tell the caller what a zoo the place is without your boss.  
g) \_\_\_\_ Find out what the caller wants and ask if you can refer her/him to someone else in the company.

**4. A caller needs to have some information on one of your company's products immediately. What do you do?**

*(more than one answer may be correct)*

- a) \_\_\_\_ Explain you don't know, but offer to transfer the caller to someone who might.  
b) \_\_\_\_ Discuss the problem and give a good guess about the answer.  
c) \_\_\_\_ Tell the caller they're out of luck and to call back the next day.  
d) \_\_\_\_ Ask why the caller needs the information right away.  
e) \_\_\_\_ Offer to transfer the caller to the manufacturing division.  
f) \_\_\_\_ Say your boss might know but is out right now, and offer to take a message.

**5. A caller is very angry about a delivery that's incorrect. What do you do?**

*(more than one answer may be correct)*

- a) \_\_\_\_ Tell the caller they've reached the wrong person.  
b) \_\_\_\_ Try to get the caller to calm down; tell him/her it doesn't help to scream. Threaten to hang up if they don't stop.  
c) \_\_\_\_ Explain that nothing can be done because your boss is away.  
d) \_\_\_\_ Offer to take down all the details and have your boss call back as soon as possible.  
e) \_\_\_\_ Tell the caller that getting a perfect delivery is very hard and it's not unusual when things get screwed up.  
f) \_\_\_\_ Apologize for the error and say you know the company will correct it as soon as possible.

**6. A boyfriend/girlfriend calls you at work. What do you do? (more than one answer may be correct)**

- a) \_\_\_\_ Talk very softly so no one will realize to whom you're talking.  
b) \_\_\_\_ Keep talking as long as your boss

isn't looking or listening.

c) \_\_\_\_ Tell your friend to call you at home that night.

d) \_\_\_\_ Ask your friend to call back when the boss is out to lunch.

e) \_\_\_\_ Tell your friend to tell you quickly what the call is about and hang up immediately after.

f) \_\_\_\_ Tell your friend you can't take personal calls at work.

# Ring! Ring!

This exercise is designed to help you practice answering the phone under different circumstances until it is easy and automatic. Answer the questions in your own words.

**Ring! Ring!** The call is from inside the company. How do you answer it? \_\_\_\_\_

**Ring! Ring!** It's an outside call. The caller wants to speak to a coworker, but that person isn't there and you don't know when he/she will be back. \_\_\_\_\_

**Ring! Ring!** The caller wants information that you are not sure of. What do you say? What do you do? \_\_\_\_\_

**Ring! Ring!** The caller wants information, but was connected to the wrong department. What do you say? \_\_\_\_\_

**Ring! Ring!** The caller asks for your boss. You know your boss wants to know who a caller is and the purpose of the call before he picks up the phone. How do you ask for the information? \_\_\_\_\_

# Answering Machines

## **Phone Communication Handout 3 -Examples only**

Be prepared to have your phone call answered by machine. Before you call, think about what you will say in case a machine comes on.

**Identify yourself, then make your  
message short and clear.**

### **EXAMPLES:**

“This is Amy at T. H. Johnson. Your order is scheduled for delivery before noon tomorrow, March 25. Please let me know if that is okay. Thank you.”

“This is Joe, in sales. Please call me back. Extension 234. Thank you.”

“This is Gordon Ash. Ms. Williams asked me to tell you the meeting will be at three. Please let me know if there is a problem. Extension 7. Thank you.”

If you have to record a message on  
your phone:

**Find out if there is a company  
format for phone messages, then  
use it exactly.**

**To compose your own message:  
identify yourself by name and  
department, as appropriate. Leave  
a brief message, probably offering  
to call back promptly.**

“This is Kevin in Accounting. I’m away from my desk or on another line. Please leave a message and I’ll call you back as soon as I can. Thank you.”

“This is Chris Jones, Smith and Company. I am on vacation and will be back on June 23. Please leave a message or you may talk to Jane on Extension 131. Thank you.”

“This is Linda in Production. Leave a message and I will call you back. Thank you.”

# Role Play

**Answer the following questions with complete sentence answers.**

Start each telephone role-play situation by saying “Ring”. The person picking up the phone then identifies themselves properly for the situation.

## **Phone Communication Handout 4**

1. It's your first day on the job in a clothing store; the caller wants to find out when the advertised sale begins and how long it lasts. What do you say?
2. You work in a restaurant and the caller wants you to look for a lost pair of gloves. It's a busy time, but the caller insists you look while he/she is on the phone. What do you say?
3. You work in a factory and the caller wants to make the date of a delivery one day earlier. You're not sure that's possible. How would you respond?
4. You work in an office and the caller is unwilling to tell you the purpose of the call, but keeps insisting that he or she speak to your boss. Your boss will ask you the purpose of the call. What do you say?
5. You work in an office; the caller is uncertain about who to talk with, but has a problem he/she is sure the company can solve. How do you handle the situation?
6. You work in the mailroom; the caller says there's an emergency that only your boss can take care of. Your boss has told you he is not to be disturbed. What do you decide to do?
7. Remember a time when someone's lack of telephone manners made you angry. Explain the situation and the way you would have liked to be treated.

# Phone Skills

## Phone Communication Handout 5 Tip Sheet

- ✓ Find out how your employer or manager wants you to answer the phone.  
Always use the approved words.
- ✓ Try to answer the phone after no more than two rings.
- ✓ Always ask the caller to whom they wish to speak. “How may I direct your call?” “Who do you want to speak to?” (Try not to say “I don’t know.” Instead say, “I’ll find out.”)
- ✓ In your efforts to be helpful, don’t offer information you’re not sure of; refer the caller to someone more knowledgeable. “Let me transfer this call to my supervisor.” “If you can hold on for a minute, I’ll check that out.”
- ✓ Don’t offer information that hasn’t been directly asked for or that might reflect poorly on your boss or a co-worker or the company.
- ✓ Always offer to take a message for someone not available. “Would you like to leave a message?” “Shall I tell her to call you back?”
- ✓ Ask callers to spell their name. Repeat the name and number to make sure you have it right. “That’s G-A-R-C-I-A at 555-5774.”
- ✓ Always have a pencil and message pad ready by the phone.
- ✓ If you have to put someone on hold, check back with them about every 30 seconds.
- ✓ Let the caller hang up first.
- ✓ Remember that, as an employee, your job is to help the caller and give a good impression of your company.

# Getting Questions Right

## Asking Questions and Listening Handout 6 True or False? When you have a question about work,

\_\_\_\_\_ a. watch everyone around you to see if they know the answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ b. listen in on phone conversations to see if you can find out what you need to know.

\_\_\_\_\_ c. ask a fellow employee what to do.

\_\_\_\_\_ d. ask your supervisor if you can have a few minutes.

\_\_\_\_\_ e. make a list of everything you need to ask before meeting with your supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_ f. if an instruction is confusing, don't ask your supervisor about it again.

He may think you're dumb.

\_\_\_\_\_ g. repeat all instructions in your own words to be sure you understood.

Ask questions immediately, if still not sure what to do.

\_\_\_\_\_ h. supervisors hate to be interrupted while they're working.

\_\_\_\_\_ i. don't ask questions; you'll look like a dummy.

\_\_\_\_\_ j. supervisors expect questions from new employees.

\_\_\_\_\_ k. your friends at work are always the best source of information.

\_\_\_\_\_ l. think about all the things you need to know before asking a question.

\_\_\_\_\_ m. your supervisor will get mad if you don't understand an instruction the first time.

### Which of the following show that you're a good listener? You...

\_\_\_\_\_ a. look the speaker in the eye but do not stare.

\_\_\_\_\_ b. keep your arms crossed in front of you while listening.

\_\_\_\_\_ c. tell the speaker you're in a hurry.

\_\_\_\_\_ d. interrupt the speaker when you

have a good idea.

\_\_\_\_\_ e. nod or say “uh-huh” to show you understand.

\_\_\_\_\_ f. repeat in your own words what you’ve been told when the speaker is finished.

\_\_\_\_\_ g. look around to see if anyone else is listening.

\_\_\_\_\_ h. find yourself looking at papers or stretching while you’re listening.

# Role Play

Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

## **Asking Questions and Listening Handout 7**

1. You need to come in late because of a doctor’s appointment. Go to your supervisor’s desk to ask if it’s okay. The supervisor is not too happy about this. What will you say? Include how much you would reveal about the appointment.
2. An important job has to get out, but you can’t remember how to do it. Find your supervisor and get the instructions again. He/ she is annoyed, but you still need the instructions. How will you approach her?
3. Your supervisor comes to your station just before lunch to give you instructions about a new system the company is putting in. Your new girl/boy friend is waiting for you in the cafeteria. What do you say to your supervisor?
4. Your supervisor gives you instructions about some work and says to “get it out soon.” As he walks away, you realize you are not sure what “soon” means. What do you do?
5. A new employee asks you where he should park his car. You both look around the lot and see it’s pretty filled. Still, he needs a space and you can see he’s shy about asking. How do you help him?
6. A sign in the workplace says “stagger your breaks.” You’re not sure what that means, but you’re afraid of sounding dumb if you ask. How do you find out?
7. You don’t like the way the work is divided up in your department.



You have some specific ideas about how to change it but you're worried about approaching your supervisor about them. What would be a good way to go about it?

# Questions and Listening Skills

## Asking Questions and Listening Handout 8 Examples Only

- ✓ Find out who in your company can answer questions about policy, tell you where things are, handle complaints, discuss health insurance and other benefits, solve a problem with another employee or supervisor and give you permission to change something.
- ✓ If you don't understand an instruction, say so immediately and ask for clarification. Always restate the answer in your own words.
- ✓ If you need to ask your supervisor a question, pick a time when he or she isn't busy. Ask for a "few minutes."
- ✓ If you must interrupt somebody to ask a question, apologize first: "Excuse me. But I can't go any further on this without asking you a question."
- ✓ Think through what you need to know BEFORE you ask the question, to make sure that you ask enough to get a complete answer.
- ✓ Repeat the answer(s) in your own words to make sure you understand it (them).
- ✓ If the answer is complicated, take notes so you don't have to ask again.
- ✓ For active listening, make eye contact, listen without interrupting. To assure the speaker of your attention and understanding, nod or use words like "Uh, huh," or "I see." When the speaker's finished, repeat the content in your own words when appropriate.
- ✓ Don't feel you have to make comments or add your own ideas immediately. It's usually wise to take time to think about your response.
- ✓ Listen to others the way you like to be listened to.

# Handling Criticism

## Handling Criticism and Mistakes Handout 9 True or False?

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. You can always learn from criticism, even if you think it's unfair.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Let your supervisor finish speaking before you answer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Most criticism means that the person criticizing doesn't like you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Ask for specific examples of the problem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. If you get a lot of criticism, you should think about quitting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. Explain that the criticism isn't fair because other employees haven't been criticized for doing the same thing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. Some people criticize everything, so it's okay to ignore what they say.
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. Apologize if that is at all appropriate.

## Which of the following should you do if you make a mistake?

*(more than one answer may be correct)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Tell your co-workers, but ask them to keep it a secret.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Correct the mistake and hope no one will notice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Figure it's okay because everyone makes mistakes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Tell your supervisor as soon as he or she is free.
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Ask your supervisor how to correct the mistake.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. Ask your supervisor how to avoid making the same mistake again.

# Role Play

Answer the questions with complete sentences

## **Handling Criticism and Mistakes Handout 10**

1. Your supervisor criticizes your work in such general terms that while you think you know what the problem is, you're not positive. In the meantime, he/ she has turned away and is walking down the hall. What do you do?
2. Your supervisor criticizes not your work, but the way you dress and your hairstyle. You knew he/she felt that way, so you've toned them down and you thought it was enough. Now he/She is complaining again. What should you do?
3. Your supervisor criticizes your work, but it's largely another employee's work that's at fault. (You did the work together.) You don't want to sound like a snitch, but you hate to have your supervisor think you're incompetent. What should you do?
4. A co-worker who is about your age has been put in charge of your work. You never got along with him and now the first thing he does is criticize your work. You're going to have to get along so you will have to find a way to make peace. What should you do to make peace?
5. You have shipped out an entire order without including some critical parts. You tell your Supervisor, who gets very angry. You really feel bad about it, and want your supervisor to know it won't happen again. What should you tell your Supervisor?

# Handling Criticism and Mistakes

## Handling Criticism and Mistakes Handout 11

### Examples Only

- ✓ Listen carefully to any criticism, even if you think you're not at fault.
- ✓ Ask for specific examples of the problem.
- ✓ Don't make excuses. Ask how you can improve your work.
- ✓ No matter how upset you are at the criticism, thank the person for letting you know something is wrong.
- ✓ Suggest a solution to the problem. If you do not know one, ask for a solution. Be sure to check your understanding of it by rephrasing in your own words.
- ✓ Explain to your supervisor what you will do to make sure the mistake doesn't happen again.
- ✓ Ask for feedback after you've had a chance to improve. Set a definite time for it.
- ✓ If you make a mistake, tell your supervisor as soon as you can.
- ✓ Apologize for the error.

# Valuable Employee

## Attitude Handout 13

### True or False?

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. People who smile a lot don't care about their work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. As long as you get the work done properly, it's not important that people like you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Part of almost every job is helping other employees with their work problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Holding the door for people is oldfashioned and unnecessary.

- \_\_\_\_\_ e. It shows a positive attitude when you volunteer for extra work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. Employees who act like they enjoy their work will usually get ahead faster than those who don't.
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. Employees who anticipate problems at work and try to solve them are valued more than those who don't.
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. Teamwork is for the playing field; at work it's everyone for himself.

**Which of the following help to make you a valuable employee?**

*(more than one answer may be correct)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Always showing up when you're expected.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Telling other employees when they're making mistakes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Helping other employees who seem to be having trouble.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Asking for another assignment when you've finished one.
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Answering the phone or responding to questions politely.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. Attending to your work and paying no attention to anyone else.
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. Complaining when asked to stay overtime.
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. Refusing to do something that's not in your job description.
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. Responding to an emergency with a willingness to help and good humor.

# Role Play

Answer the questions/discussions with complete sentences

**Attitude Handout 14**

1. Another employee has called in sick. An important job has to be finished that day. You have your own work load. Discuss the problem with your supervisor.
2. A new employee obviously is dressing inappropriately on the job. You take on the job of telling her/him. The employee argues back, saying he/she has a right to dress as he/she pleases. What do you do now?
3. In the cafeteria, you see an employee approach you to help him. He is very distressed because he doesn't understand the work. What do you say or do?
4. Another employee complains to you about the work and your mutual supervisor. He/she says he is being asked to do tasks that he hasn't really learned yet. What do you say or do?
5. Your supervisor asks you to teach a particular job to a newcomer. You have a lot of work to get out and you know you won't be able to finish if you stop to help the newcomer. What do you say to your supervisor?
6. There have been cutbacks and a friend of yours has been fired. You and your co-workers are upset and feel threatened. You decide to talk to your supervisor - what do you say?
7. You have been passed over for a promotion which you think you deserve. Discuss the situation with your supervisor - what do you say?

# Communicating a

# Positive Attitude

## Attitude Handout 15 Tip Sheet

- ✓ Always dress appropriately for your job in clean, neat clothes.
- ✓ Smile at others as often as you can
- ✓ Make a point of being polite to co-workers, supervisors, and customers.
- ✓ Let people know that you enjoy your work.
- ✓ When you finish an assignment, tell your supervisor and ask for another.
- ✓ If there's an emergency, volunteer to help before you're asked.
- ✓ If someone is having problems, offer to help.
- ✓ Remember that the workplace is a team and that you are part of that team.
- ✓ Help your supervisor to look good by doing your best.
- ✓ Don't complain.
- ✓ Try to anticipate problems and solve them before they happen.
- ✓ Set an example for others by being serious about your work, pleasant and helpful on the job